

Application No. : 10/680,938
Filed : October 7, 2003

IN THE CLAIMS

5 Please cancel Claims 55-57 without prejudice, amend Claims 28, 36, 39-41, 44, 45, 51, 58, and 59, and add new Claims 60-61, as follows:

1.27. (Cancelled)

10 28. (Currently amended) A dispenser for spooled materials, comprising:
a housing element having a recess formed therein;
a plurality of spools of material disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element; and

15 a plurality of apertures disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said material from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

20 wherein said housing element is substantially planar in shape, said substantially planar shape comprising a depth which is less than both a width and a length of said housing, and has at least first and second faces, said plurality of spools comprising at least a first group of spools disposed within a first row in substantially parallel juxtaposed orientation within said recess, and at least a second group of spools disposed within a second row in substantially parallel juxtaposed orientation within said recess, said first and second rows being at least partly offset from one another in at least two dimensions, said plurality of apertures being formed within at least one of said first and second faces.

25 29. (Original) The dispenser of Claim 28, wherein said material comprises quantities of pre-curled ribbon each having a plurality of individual turns, said quantities of pre-curled ribbon being disposed on respective ones of said spools in a helical lay pattern, the radius of said spools further being selected so as to be substantially similar to that of said turns of said pre-curled ribbon.

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30. (Original) The dispenser of Claim 29, further comprising a plurality of spindle elements, said spindle elements facilitating rotation of respective ones of said spools around respective rotational axes such that each of said spools may rotate within said dispenser without interference from other ones of said spools disposed therein.

5 31. (Original) The dispenser of Claim 29, wherein said apertures are substantially elongate and co-extensive with said spools.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 29, wherein said apertures are substantially elongate and co-extensive with said spools such that said ribbon can be drawn
10 through respective ones of said apertures, said ribbon traversing substantially all of the length of said respective apertures during said act of drawing.

34. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 33, wherein the radius of said spools is selected so as to be substantially similar to that of said turns of said pre-curled ribbon.

35. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 28, wherein said housing element is substantially planar in shape, with said plurality of spools disposed in substantially juxtaposed and parallel orientation within said recess has a length and width and depth, each of said length and width and depth being unequal.
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36. (Currently amended) The dispenser of Claim 28, wherein said housing has a depth, said offset in said at least two dimensions of said rows permitting said depth to be less than the sum of the diameter of two of said spools allowing said depth to be smaller than it would otherwise be if no such offset were present.
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37. (Cancelled)

38. (Previously presented) The dispenser of Claim 28, wherein said spools each have first and second ends, the distal portions of said ends not having ribbon wound thereon, said
25 distal portions cooperating with respective ones of features formed in said housing to both substantially restrain said spools and allow their rotation within said features.

39. (Currently amended) Curled ribbon dispensing apparatus, comprising:

a housing having at least first and second housing elements, said first and second housing elements forming a recess when mated together;

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a plurality of elongate spools of curled ribbon disposed substantially within said recess, said ribbon wound onto said spools in a substantially helical pattern after at least a portion thereof has been curled; and

5 a plurality of elongate apertures disposed in proximity to and substantially parallel to longitudinal axes of respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

wherein at least one of said housing elements has at least a portion thereof which is substantially transparent, such that a user may view said spools therethrough.

40. (Currently amended) Curled ribbon dispensing apparatus manufactured
10 according to the method comprising:
providing a quantity of uncurled ribbon;
curling said ribbon;
disposing the curled at least a portion of said ribbon on a substantially elongate spool after said at least portion has been curled;
15 forming a housing from a plurality of elements which, when mated, form a recess, at least one of said elements having an aperture formed therein;
after substantially all of said uncurled ribbon had been curled and disposed on said spool,
disposing said spool with said curled ribbon within said recess;
threading a free end of said ribbon through said aperture; and
20 mating said at least two housing elements.

41. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 40, wherein said acts of curling and disposing the curled ribbon are performed substantially at the same time, said ribbon being curled as it is being immediately prior to being wound onto said spool.

42. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 40, wherein said spool has a radius, 25 said radius being selected to be substantially similar to a desired radius of the curl of said ribbon.

43. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 40, wherein said act of disposing said ribbon on said spool comprises winding said ribbon onto said spool in a helical lay pattern.

44. (Currently amended) Apparatus for dispensing heterogeneous curled ribbons, comprising:

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a housing having a plurality of housing elements, said housing having a recess formed therein;

5 a plurality of spools of curled ribbon disposed substantially within said recess in substantially parallel orientation, said ribbon having a curl radius determined before winding onto said spools and being wound onto said spools in a substantially helical pattern, said spools having a radius similar to said curl radius; and

a plurality of elongate apertures disposed in proximity to and substantially parallel to longitudinal axes of respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

10 wherein at least a portion of said spools carry ribbon different in at least one attribute from that on any other of said spools.

45. (Currently amended) A dispenser for spooled ribbon, comprising:

a housing element having a recess formed therein;

15 a plurality of spools of pre-curled ribbon disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element; and

a plurality of apertures disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said pre-curled ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough.

wherein said pre-curled ribbon has a plurality of individual turns, said pre-curled ribbon being disposed on said spools in a helical lay pattern, the radius of said spools further being selected so as to be substantially similar to that of said turns of said pre-curled ribbon before it is placed on said spools.

46. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 45, further comprising a plurality of spindle elements, said spindle elements facilitating rotation of respective ones of said spools around respective rotational axes such that each of said spools may rotate within said dispenser without interference from other ones of said spools disposed therein.

47. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 45, wherein said apertures are substantially elongate and co-extensive with said spools such that said ribbon can be drawn

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through respective ones of said apertures, said ribbon traversing substantially all of the length of said respective apertures during said act of drawing.

5 48. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 45, wherein said housing element is substantially planar in shape, with said plurality of spools disposed in substantially juxtaposed and parallel orientation within said recess.

49. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 45, wherein said housing element is substantially cylindrical in shape, with said plurality of spools disposed in substantially parallel orientation within said recess.

10 50. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 45, wherein said spools each have first and second ends, the distal portions of said ends not having ribbon wound thereon, said distal portions cooperating with respective ones of features formed in said housing to both substantially restrain said spools and allow their rotation within said features.

51. (Currently amended) A dispenser for spooled materials, comprising:

15 a substantially cylindrical housing element having a recess formed therein and at least one cap element;

a plurality of spools of material disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element, said spools each having first and second ends;

a plurality of spindle elements disposed so as to rotatably engage respective ones of said ends of said spools; and

20 a plurality of apertures disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said material from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

wherein said at least one cap element is positioned retained on said housing without use of any structures within projecting out of said recess.

25 52. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 51, wherein said housing and at least one cap element comprise a polymeric material.

53. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 51, wherein said plurality of spools comprises three (3) spools disposed in substantially parallel orientations and such that the first ends of said spools collectively form a triangular pattern.

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54. (Previously Presented) The dispenser of Claim 51, wherein said spindle elements comprise elements formed as part of said recess.

55.-57. (Cancelled)

5 58. (Currently amended) A dispenser for dispensing pre-curled ribbon which maintains at least some of said pre-curl after being dispensed, comprising:

a housing element comprising a transparent ~~low-cost polymer~~ material and having a recess formed therein;

10 a plurality of spools of pre-curled ribbon disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element, said spools each having first and second ends, said ribbon on each spool being of different color than that of at least some of others of said plurality of spools;

a plurality of spindle elements formed within said recess and disposed so as to rotatably receive respective ones of said ends of said spools; and

15 a plurality of apertures formed in said housing element disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

wherein use of said pre-curled ribbon within said dispenser obviates the need for any curling apparatus on said dispenser.

59. (Currently amended) A curler-less apparatus for dispensing curled pre-curled ribbon that is curled by a curling mechanism before being placed on a spool, comprising:

20 a housing having at least first and second matable elements each comprising a polymer material and forming a substantially enclosed recess when mated;

a plurality of spools of pre-curled ribbon disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element, said spools each having first and second ends and being disposed in a substantially parallel within said recess; and

25 a plurality of apertures formed in said housing element disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

wherein said housing elements cooperate to maintain said spools in relative alignment within said recess without the use of a central partition within said recess.

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60. (New) A dispenser for pre-curved ribbon, comprising:

a housing element comprising a polymer material and having a recess formed therein;

a plurality of spools of pre-curved ribbon disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element, said spools each having first and second ends;

5 a plurality of spindle elements disposed so as to rotatably engage respective ones of said ends of said spools; and

a plurality of apertures formed in said housing element disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

10 wherein said pre-curved ribbon is disposed in a helical lay pattern on said spools, and the radius of at least one of said spools is selected to as to be substantially the same as the radius of said pre-curved ribbon after said pre-curved ribbon is curled yet before it is wound onto said at least one spool; and

15 wherein use of said pre-curved ribbon obviates the need for any curling mechanisms on said dispenser.

61. (New) Apparatus for dispensing pre-curved ribbon, comprising:

a housing element comprising a polymer material and having a recess formed therein;

a plurality of spools of pre-curved ribbon disposed substantially within said recess of said housing element, said spools each having first and second ends;

20 a plurality of spindle elements disposed so as to rotatably engage respective ones of said ends of said spools; and

a plurality of apertures formed in said housing element disposed in proximity to respective ones of said spools, said apertures being adapted to pass said ribbon from said respective ones of said spools therethrough;

25 wherein said pre-curved ribbon is disposed in a helical lay pattern on said spools, and the radius of at least one of said spools is selected to as to be substantially the same as the radius of said pre-curved ribbon after said pre-curved ribbon is curled yet before it is wound onto said at least one spool; and

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wherein said pre-curled ribbon and said radius of said at least one spool cooperate to allow for dispensing of curled ribbon without passing said ribbon through or over a curling mechanism before it is dispensed.